

thrusings

Thriving together at Millbrook



OCT 2026

ISSUE NO. 01

STORIES OF THRIVING

thrusings
noun [plural]

your thoughts or comments on something you have been thinking about carefully and for a long time, and specifically, elements that thrive

Congratulations, *Musings*, you've got a spin-off! Welcome to *Thrusing*s, a place to muse about what it means for Millbrook to thrive as a congregation.

Full disclosure: This volume is more condensed than previous editions of *Musings*. And future volumes may take on forms beyond a literary magazine. Think living, breathing conversations with community members of all ages; videos; murals; wherever the Spirit leads.

We love Millbrook. We've seen her thrive for 150 years. We want her to thrive for another 150 years. We believe the best way to accomplish that is to be intentional in identifying those moments and places where we feel most connected to one another, where the Spirit swirls all around us, where meaning and purpose abound. And then, to give considerable time and attention to how we bring our thriving to life, and share it with others.

When we dreamed of creating *Musings* in early 2024, we envisioned a literary space that would invite expressions from our entire community. That's exactly what happened. More than 50 submissions from 30 different people. Now, we dream of a space(s) where every Millbrooker helps write a definition of thriving for our community. And we faith that thriving spaces will keep taking shape.

Come thrive with us!

The MBC Thrive Team

Becky Albritton
Angela Hatchell
Jackson Helms
Reggie Jackson

Jessica McDougald
Cassidy Padgett
Lloyd Spruill
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Thriving Together at Millbrook



MILLBROOK
Baptist Church

Raleigh, NC
Est. 1875

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2026

THRIVING



Ordinations
Cereal Potluck
Gospel Brunch
Ash Wednesday
Paper Mile
Gospel Brunch
Guys n Grub
Creative Worship
Ordinations
Butterfly Release
Easter Sunrise Service
Ordinations
Guys n Grub
Millbrook
Millbrook
Food Drive
Beach Trip
Ash Wednesday
Millbrook
Millbrook
Snowday Sermons
Paper Mile
Beach Trip
Millbrook
Ash Wednesday
Millbrook
Thriv^{ing} in 2026
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Food Drive
Ash Wednesday
Cereal Potluck
Ordinations
Shrove Tuesday
Shrove Tuesday
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THRIVING IN WORSHIP

All Saints Sunday

Stewardship Sunday

Reign of Christ Sunday

North Raleigh Interfaith Thanksgiving Service

Season of Advent

- Sunday of Hope: Greening Our Sanctuary
- Sunday of Peace: Featuring the Millbrook Ringers & Children's Choir
- Sunday of Joy: Christmas Cantata
- Sunday of Love: Lesson and Carols
- Christmas Eve: Candlelight Communion Service

THRIVING IN COMMUNITY

Trunk or Treat

Christmas Day Camp

Craziest Christmas Pageant Ever

THRIVING IN SERVICE

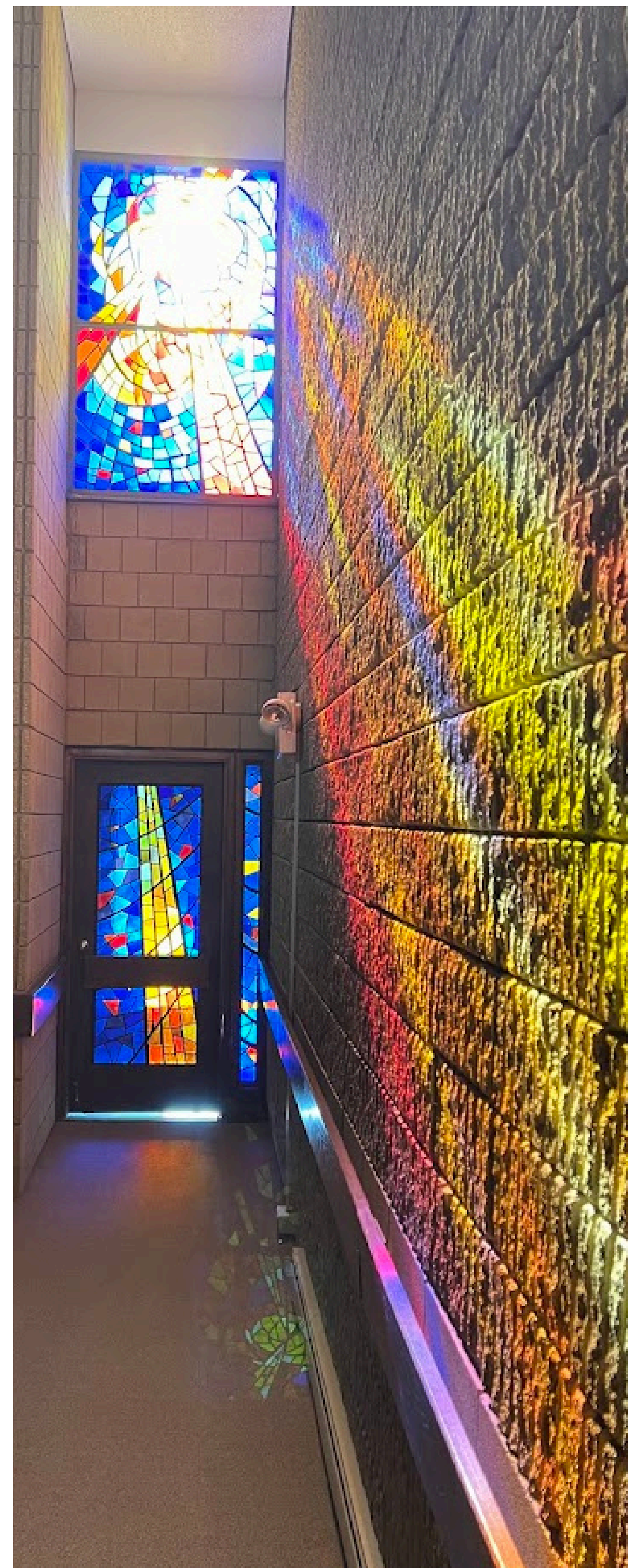
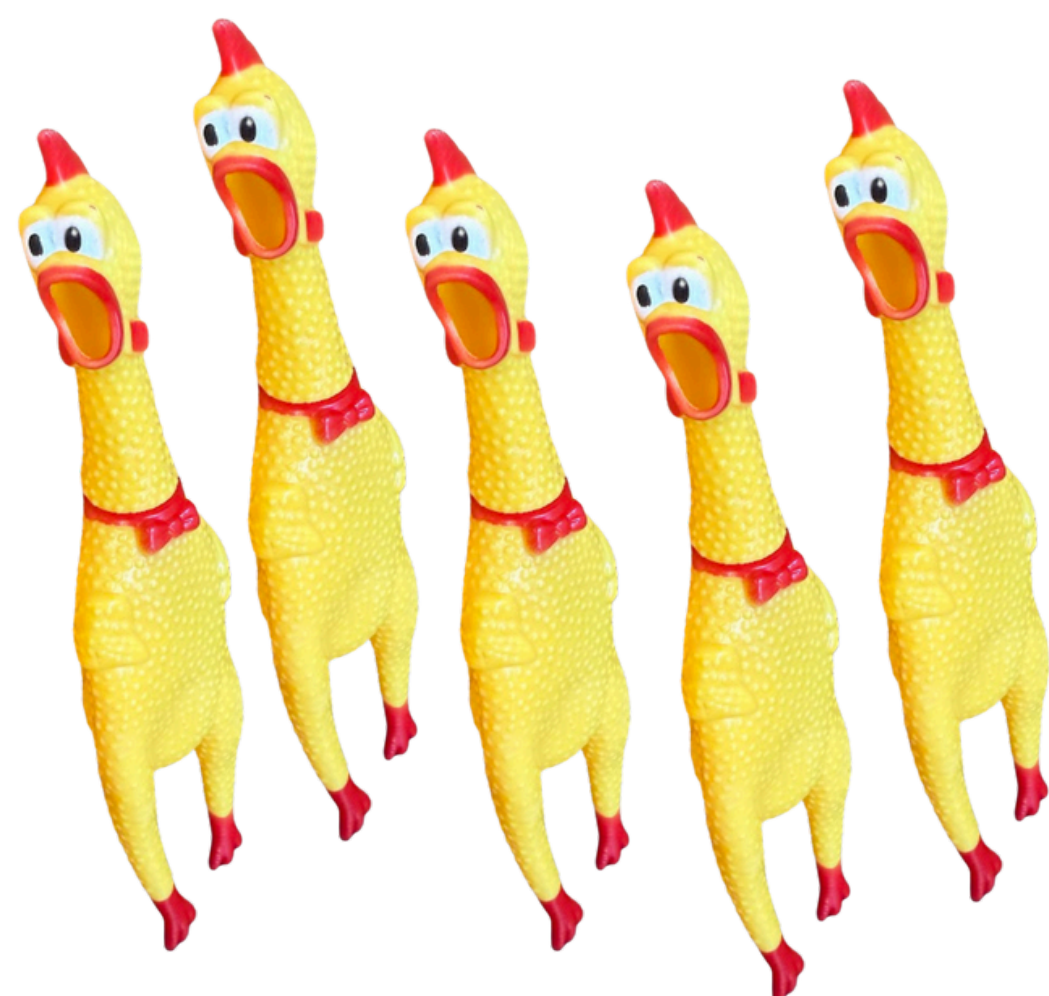
Greater Triangle CROP Walk

Soup Up and Spruce Up

Advent Decorating Day

Warmth of Giving

Carolyn's Baskets



THRIVING AT TABLES

October Fellowship Meal
November Fellowship Meal
December Potluck
December Luncheon
Seasonal Coffee Hours

THRIVING IN SMALL GROUPS

Choir Rehearsals
Sunday School
Weekly Bible Study

THRIVING IN CONVERSATION

Thrive Thought-starters
Churchwide Thrive Discussions
Thrive Content



Calendar

DATE	TIME	EVENT
Saturday, October 17, 2026	4:00 PM	MBC Trunk or Treat
Sunday, October 18, 2026	9:30 AM	Churchwide Thrive Discussion
Tuesday, October 20, 2026	2:00 PM - 9:00 PM	Pictures
Wednesday, October 21, 2026	2:00 PM - 9:00 PM	Pictures
Wednesday, October 21, 2026	5:30 PM	Fellowship Meal and Thrive Discussion
Sunday, October 25, 2026	3:00 PM	CROP WALK
Sunday, November 1, 2026	11:00 AM	ALL SAINTS SUNDAY WORSHIP
Sunday, November 8, 2026	12:30 PM	SOUP UP AND SPRUCE UP
Wednesday, November 11, 2026	TBD	Quarterly Business Meeting (Annual Budget)
Sunday, November 15, 2026	9:30 AM	Churchwide Thrive Discussion
Wednesday, November 18, 2026	5:30 PM	Thanksgiving Fellowship Meal
Sunday, November 22, 2026	11:00 AM	Reign of Christ Sunday
Monday, November 23, 2026	TBD	Interfaith Thanksgiving Service
Tuesday, November 24, 2026	10:00 AM	Advent Decorating Day
Sunday, November 29, 2026	11:00 AM	Advent One: Hanging of Greens
Sunday, December 6, 2026	11:00 AM	Advent Two: Children's and Handbell Choirs
Sunday, December 13, 2026	11:00 AM	Advent Three: Christmas Cantata
Sunday, December 13, 2026	NOON	Monthly Church Potluck/Carolyn's Baskets
Wednesday, December 16, 2026	NOON	Fellowship Lunch/Carolyn's Baskets
Sunday, December 20, 2026	11:00 AM	Advent Four: Lessons and Carols
Monday, December 21, 2026	9:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Christmas Break Day Camp
Monday, December 21, 2026	2:00 PM	Fourth Craziest Christmas Pageant Ever
Thursday, December 24, 2026	5:00 PM	Candlelight Christmas Eve Service

What does it look like for Millbrook to Thrive?

Millbrook thrives when they are caring for one another. Millbrook is involved in the wider community in many ways, but they are particularly talented in sharing with and caring for one another. To me, a thriving church is one where everyone can live into their calling, whether that is helping plan meals, teaching the children, welcoming visitors, or listening to someone's story. Millbrook is a place where people can find a safe space to learn and receive the encouragement to grow. Millbrook thrives at welcoming a stranger and creating space for them to become part of the community.

-Cassidy Padgett

I spy Millbrook thriving when . . . We live faithfully in our corner of the community and world. When we live out care for one another of all ages through our prayers, our acts of service and our times of celebration, we are thriving. When we embrace the larger community through walking the CROP Walk, paying down school lunch debts, and joining in worship with our sisters and brothers of differing faith traditions, we are thriving. Millbrook, may we keep our eyes and hearts open to all the ways God is calling us.

So, members of Millbrook, what are the ways you spy us thriving?

-Becky Albritton

If you want to see a clear picture of Millbrook Thriving, all you have to do is swing by the kids table at any of our monthly potlucks. The MBC kiddos are dessert table raiding, snack swapping, drink mixing, non-stop talking potluck professionals.

-Jessica McDougald

WHAT IS CONGREGATIONAL THRIVING?

Andy Hale

Rev. Dr. Andy Hale is the Associate Executive Coordinator for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina and leads the Helping Churches Thrive cohort. Andy offers his thoughts on the definition of thriving.

Thriving isn't a buzzword. It's a heartbeat.

You can feel it when you walk into a sanctuary buzzing with post-worship conversations that linger long after the benediction. You can sense it in the joy of a child running down the hallway, the vulnerability of someone sharing their story for the first time in years, the quiet faithfulness of a widow who still shows up week after week, praying for others by name.

Thriving isn't about numbers—it's about vitality. It's not success by corporate metrics; it's the Spirit breathing life into a people willing to be led.

In the Helping Churches Thrive cohort, churches were invited to ask the question: "What does thriving look like in our context?" And here's what emerged—it doesn't look the same everywhere. A thriving church in a small town might look like a food pantry and shared space with local nonprofits. In the city, it might be a multicultural worship gathering, a trauma-informed youth program, or a quiet coffee hour where stories unfold with grace.

What unites these expressions isn't strategy—it's posture. A thriving church is rooted in prayer and guided by discernment. It listens to its people. It experiments. It holds tradition with one hand and the future with the other.

Scripture gives us glimpses of this kind of church. In Acts 2:42–47, we find a vibrant community of shared meals, mutual care, Spirit-led teaching, and overflowing generosity. The people weren't just attending—they were belonging, becoming, blessing. And "the Lord added to their number daily."

Paul describes the church as a body—each part essential (1 Corinthians 12). Thriving means every member knows they're needed. It means gifts are noticed and nurtured. It means people grow not just in knowledge, but in Christlike love (Ephesians 4:15–16).

But here's the paradox: thriving isn't constant. It's not a finish line. It's more like a rhythm—a living pattern of growth, pruning, rest, and renewal. Jesus said, "I am the vine; you are the branches... If you remain in me... you will bear much fruit" (John 15:5). Thriving comes from abiding. From staying connected. From trusting that God is still at work, even when it's hard to see.

Churches stall when they mistake a peak for permanence. When they chase past success instead of present faithfulness. But churches thrive when they lean into the unknown with courage—open to the Spirit's disruption, attentive to the needs of the world, and willing to ask again and again, "What is God doing here?"

In the end, thriving churches don't just survive—they become places of transformation. Not only for their members, but for their neighbors. For the lonely, the questioning, the weary, and the seeking.

A thriving church is not a monument to what was. It's a movement toward what could be—alive with grace, rooted in love, and always becoming.



How You Can Participate

Every member of Millbrook Baptist Church is invited and encouraged to engage in the Thrive journey.

Here are a few simple ways to get involved:

- Attend the Churchwide Discussion on the Third Sunday of each active month (Fellowship Hall, 9:30–10:30 AM)
- Look out for monthly thought starters and engage with fellow Millbrookers
- Respond to congregational surveys and share your honest perspective
- Follow MBC social media for theme updates, short videos, and discussion prompts
- Talk with members of the MBC Thrive Team: they want to hear from you

Questions? Contact the MBC Thrive Team or visit millbrookbaptist.org.



Learn more about CBFNC's
Helping Churches Thrive Program